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## DON YGNACIO DEL VALLE

BY H. D. BARROWS.

Among the many interesting characters of early Los Angeles whom I knew, was Don Ygnacio del Valle. Although, comparatively speaking, I had only a slight acquaintance with Don Ygnacio, I saw him frequently. I knew of his general character and the warm regard in which he was held by his intimates and by the community in which he was prominent for so many years, to greatly admire and respect him for his sterling qualities as a man and a citizen. In person, he was of medium height, rather stout, with pleasing features, and his manners, dignified, courteous and gentle. He has been dead almost twenty years, but I venture to say that all who knew him who survive him retain only pleasant memories concerning him.

Judge Ygnacio Sepulveda, a former District Judge of Los Angeles county, who knew Mr. del Valle well, wrote a memorial sketch of him on the occasion of his death, which occurred in April, 1880. And, though this sketch was published at the time, it will doubtless be of interest to many others of today, besides the members of our Historical Society, to learn what Judge Sepulveda had to say of his friend, inasmuch as something like 90,000 people have come to Los Angeles since Mr. del Valle's death.

Judge Sepulveda says:

" \* \* \* Don Ygnacio del Valle was born in the State of Jalisco, Mexico, on the first of July, 1808. He received a liberal education, his parents having been persons of wealth and position. In the year 1818 depredations were committed on the coast towns of California by pirates under the command of a desperado named Bouchard. To protect the country two military companies, one from San Blas, were sent to California by the Mexican government in 1819. Don Antonio del Valle, father of Don Ygnacio, was Lieutenant of the San Blas company. Six years after the arrival of Don Antonio in California, he sent for his son, Ygnacio, who landed in Monterey on the 27th of July, 1825. In March, 1828, Don Ygnacio entered the service as Second Lieutenant, being attached to the

staff of General Echeandia, Governor of California, with headquarters at San Diego, remaining there until 1833, discharging various functions at that place, as Captain in command of the place and chief custom house officer.

"On the arrival of Governor Figueroa in 1833 Lieutenant del Valle was transferred to Monterey, where he continued to discharge his duties on the staff of Governor Figueroa until the latter's death in 1836, when, on account of the insurrection led by Castro and Alvarado against the government represented by Gutierrez, Lieutenant del Valle, unwilling to take part in the movement, remained separated from the service until 1840, when he obtained his discharge.

"In 1834, Don Ygnacio was appointed Commissioner by Governor Figueroa in the secularization of the missions. He fully carried out his orders with respect to the missions of San Gabriel, Santa Cruz and Dolores. In '42 he was appointed juez of the mining district of San Francisquito. In 1845 he was a member of the Junta Departmental, or Departmental Assembly of California, and in 1846 he was appointed Treasurer of the Department, occupying said office until the United States took possession of the country. In 1850 he was Alcalde of Los Angeles, and on the first election under American rule, he was elected Recorder of the county, and in 1852 was member of the Assembly from Los Angeles county."

After 1861 Don Ygnacio resided on his rancho at Camulos with his family, "devoting his time to the rearing and proper education of his children, and to the development of his beautiful domain."

Don Ygnacio was twice married, his second wife being a daughter of Cerbol Varelas. No issue of the first marriage survives. His widow still resides on Camulos rancho. The eldest of their six children is Hon. Reginaldo F. del Valle, an attorney of this city, who since the death of his father has successively represented Los Angeles county in both the Assembly and the State Senate. A daughter of Don Ygnacio is married to J. F. Forster, son of the Pioneer, Mr. John Forster, formerly of the rancho of Santa Margarita.

All who knew Mr. del Valle in his lifetime will sympathize with and indorse the following eloquent and true words of Judge Sepulveda concerning his friend, the subject of this sketch:

"There was much in his life to engage our affection and respect. Few men have impressed upon the memory of their friends a livelier sense of excellence and unsullied virtue. In the private and domestic circle he was greatly beloved. He was confiding and affec-

tionate. He possessed an enlightened benevolence and a warm sensibility, always eager to advance those who were within the sphere of his influence. He was a man of inflexible honor and integrity, a devout lover of truth, and conscientiously scrupulous in the discharge of his duties. \* \* \* The tears that fall upon his grave are unstained by any mixture of bitterness for frailty or for vice. He lived as a true man would wish to live. He died as a good man would wish to die."